



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Agriculture Department issues fines and suspensions for pesticide violations

OLYMPIA - During the second quarter of 2004, the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$2,810 against six individuals for violating state pesticide laws and rules. Five of the individuals had their licenses suspended for a total of 22 days, and another individual, who was not fined, had his license suspended for 36 days.

Fines ranged from \$200 to \$900 for violations that included not following pesticide label directions, allowing pesticides to drift onto a person or property, faulty structural pest inspections and failing to submit pesticide application records.

A penalty matrix is used to ensure penalties are uniform and fair. The matrix takes into account the seriousness of the violation, whether it is a first or a repeat offense, and whether there are any aggravating or mitigating factors involved. Larger penalties often reflect repeat offenses or multiple violations within the same incident.

WSDA enforces state and federal laws to protect people, property and the environment against the improper use of pesticides. Staff also provides technical assistance to the pesticide industry and consumers, and enforces the rules on structural inspections for wood destroying organisms, such as carpenter ants, termites or certain beetles. About 200 allegations of improper distribution or misuse of pesticides, or faulty structural inspections are investigated each year.

To file a complaint involving the misuse of a pesticide, or to find out if a pesticide applicator or structural pest inspector is licensed, call (877) 301-4555.

Robert L. Abramowski, Public Operator for Okanogan County Public Works. WSDA alleged that roadside herbicide applications made by Abramowski in the spring of 2000 damaged adjacent fruit trees. The matter was resolved when, without an admission of wrongdoing, Abramowski agreed to a nine-day license suspension and to pay \$550.

Sergio Bernal, Private Applicator for Lakeside Orchards, Othello. WSDA alleged that in the spring of 2003, while supervising pesticide applications made by unlicensed coworkers, Bernal allowed pesticides to drift onto adjacent residential properties. The matter was resolved when, without an admission of wrongdoing, Bernal agreed to pay \$300 and have his license suspended for four days.

Brian Cobb, Ephrata. WSDA alleged that in the spring of 2003 Cobb killed several dogs running loose by baiting a calf carcass with a highly toxic pesticide. The matter was resolved when, without an admission of wrongdoing, Cobb agreed to pay \$900.

E. Dorm Cooley, Structural Pest Inspector, Cooley Inspection Services, Anacortes. In late winter and early spring of 2004 Cooley conducted a series of wood destroying organism (WDO) inspections on a house in Anacortes. The inspection reports issued by Cooley were found to be grossly in error. He failed to report extensive structural damage that was so advanced that the City of Anacortes is considering condemning the house. Cooley's Structural Pest Inspector license was suspended for a period of 36 days.

Robert M. Green, Structural Pest Inspector and owner of World Inspection Network, Woodinville. WSDA alleged that in May of 2003 Green conducted an inadequate wood destroying organism (WDO) inspection and issued a false and misleading report on a house in Lynnwood. WSDA also alleged that Green failed to submit WDO records as requested. The matter was resolved when Green agreed to pay \$360 and have his license suspended for two days.

James R. Keller, Private Applicator from Tieton. Keller was assessed a \$500 fine and his license was suspended for six days. In December of 2003 Keller failed to submit pesticide application records as requested by WSDA.

David E. Twitchell, Commercial Applicator and president of Pests-Or-Us, Inc. East Wenatchee. WSDA alleged that Twitchell applied a pesticide inconsistent with the label when he applied it to a site not listed on the label. The matter was resolved when Twitchell agreed to pay \$200 and accept a one-day license suspension.

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